

CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Civic Consciousness

(PAPERS OF THE SEMINAR)



CENTRE FOR URBAN STUDIES
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PREFACE

A citizenry conscious of its rights as well as responsibilities is essential for the proper functioning of an administration. This is all the more important for the success of local government which is founded on the principle of people's participation in local administration. Due to the close proximity of the citizens and the local government, it is often said that civic administration is carried right up to the door steps of the citizens. Civic consciousness on the part of the citizens is, therefore, a basic precondition for the success of local government. However, civic consciousness has not so far come up adequately among the citizens of this country for various reasons.

Both as an ideal and operational imperative of good citizenship, the theme of civic consciousness should evoke greater interest and concern in all sections of the society. I do hope this book will help to promote such a dialogue. The papers included in this volume closely analyze the various facets of this problem and also suggest ways to promote civic consciousness so that civic administration can be assisted in its work. It is hoped that the volume will be useful to city fathers, civic administrators and students of urban administration.

The volume contains papers contributed at a high level seminar organized by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in collaboration with the Centre for Training and Research in Municipal Administration (now the Centre for Urban Studies) of the Indian Institute of Public Administration in January, 1973. Because of the practical usefulness of the theme of the papers it was decided to publish them in the form of a book. The MCD was kind enough to grant permission for the publication.

Prof. Abhijit Datta took the initiative in bringing the papers together and edited them for publication. In this he was ably assisted by Shri Gangadhar Jha, who went through the manuscript and also wrote the introduction. I am thankful to both of them.

T.N. Chaturvedi

NEW DELHI
MARCH 12, 1979

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INTRODUCTION

The local government is founded with an ostensible objective of ensuring people's participation in its programmes. Unlike other higher levels of government, the local government, being closer to the people, have maximum contact and a strong communication with the citizens which help them in divising ways and means of serving the needs and aspirations of the local community living within its jurisdiction. The local government thus provides an important forum for serving the needs of the local populace according to their wishes. An enlightened citizenry and an articulate civic consciousness, therefore, prove to be a valuable asset for the local authorities.

However, in spite of relatively longer history of their existence, the local authorities have not been able to receive civic consciousness adequately. Why is it that civic consciousness is not forthcoming in our cities and towns? Is it because of an indifferent attitude of the citizen, or due to the lack of education and civic sense, or is it a sheer manifestation of the malfunctioning of urban local authorities?

In order to find answer to these searching questions and also to devise ways of promoting civic consciousness, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi organised a Seminar in collaboration with the Centre for Training and Research in Municipal Administration (now Centre for Urban Studies) of the Indian Institute of Public Administration in January, 1973 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The Seminar was inaugurated by the then Vice-President of India, Shri.G.S. Pathak. Shri Kidarnath Sahni, then Mayor of Delhi delivered the welcome address. The Seminar was addressed also by the Union Cabinet Minister Shri Jagjivan Ram, Shri Baleshwar Prasad, the then Lt. Governor of Delhi, and was attended by distinguished persons from various walks of life including the mayors of other city corporations, Ex-Mayors of Delhi, Members of Parliament, Metropolitan

Council of Delhi, Members and officials of the Delhi Develo-
 pment Authority, New Delhi Municipal Committee, eminent
 representatives of major national newspapers and leaders in the
 spheres of education, social welfare and politics.

The Seminar discussed in detail the various facets of civic
 consciousness and the measures to promote it for the benefit of
 civic administration. Eight valuable papers contributed at the
 Seminar facilitated the two-day deliberations. These papers have
 been included in this volume for wider audience. Dealing with
 various aspects of the problem, the papers are both diagnostic
 and prescriptive in nature.

Mohit Bhattacharya in his paper observes that citizen's
 interest in local affairs is hampered because of poverty and
 perennial scarcity of essential services. The civic administration
 has, therefore, necessarily to be service-oriented for winning the
 confidence of citizens. In the sprawling metropolitan cities, he
 argues, the fragmentation of civic service administration and the
 'shape of local government' act as impediments in the way of
 citizen municipal understanding. He, therefore, suggests a two-
 tier municipal government based on the federal principle of
 distribution of power.

R.M. Verma argues that civic consciousness is a two-way
 traffic wherein the civic administration is expected to provide
 an efficient provision of services and remove the grievances
 of the citizens and the latter are expected to cultivate a sense of
 responsibility. Unfortunately, this has assumed the shape of a
 vicious circle which has to be broken first by the civic admini-
 stration. This can be possible by making the citizens feel a sense
 of belongingness, redressing their grievances and educating them.
 Citizens' grievances against the civic bodies in Delhi is studied
 by L.P. Gupta. Based on a content analysis of a column
 in a local daily newspaper ventilating public grievances, he lists
 the types of grievances and then suggests suitable steps to red-
 ress them.

In order to develop civic consciousness and a good citizenry,
 S.N. Rao suggests to adopt the students as the target group.
 Students form the core of citizenship and happen to be at the
 critical stage of habit formation. The schools can, therefore,
 play an important role in cultivating virtues of a good citizenry.

paramount role to the educational institutions in arousing civic consciousness among the pupils. Students and teachers along with the local leaders have to participate in occasional cleanliness drives and adult education. This would go a long way in inculcating civic consciousness among the residents of that local area.

J. N. Singh has studied the scope of people's participation in the public health programme of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. He observes that much of the problem in this field has cropped up because of carelessness on part of the citizens. He feels that civic authorities, parents, teachers and social workers have to play an equal role in propagating civic sense.

Civic consciousness among the citizens depends to a great extent, at least in the short run, on an adequate role performance of an efficient public relations. Analysing the role of public relations in creating a sense of awareness among the citizens and also to gain public confidence, Basudev Sharma suggests that the public relations system has to recognise the existence of many publics as the target groups and different media have to be adopted to reach the different types of public.

The syndicate report prepared by the municipal officers studies the existing system of redressal of citizens' grievances with special reference of municipal services. The report suggests that the confidence of citizens can be won by an adequate machinery for redressal of public grievances. This itself depends upon internal set-up of the organisation as manifested in the functioning of public relations, vigilance officer and the elected councillors. The report gives several useful suggestions to re-orient the civic administration for effectively redressing the grievances of the public and arousing civic consciousness.

WELCOME ADDRESS

Kidar Nath Sahani

No public institution, more particularly no local body, however resourceful, can make much headway without the understanding and cooperation of the citizens, whom it seeks to serve. The involvement of the citizens in the functioning of local bodies and other representative institutions has been a recurring theme in our national life. Soon after Independence, when the nation launched upon the programmes of rural community development, it was soon realised that the involvement of the people covered under the programme was a *sine qua non* of the success of the community development programme. This realisation led to the appointment and the far-reaching recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. For some reason, the problem of citizens, participation in urban local Government has not attracted equally great attention even though the realisation of its importance is not wanting. Perhaps, this has been so because of the fact that this realisation was in a defused rather than sharply-defined and concentrated form. It was with the object of bringing this important issue in sharp focus that we decided to organise this two-day national level Seminar on civic consciousness. I had posed this problem before the Mayors of major cities on the occasion of the meeting of Executive Committee of the all India Mayors' Council. The consensus was that seminars on this issue should be organised by the Municipal Corporations in their respective cities. I am happy to say that the capital city is today taking the lead in doing so which, I am confident, will be followed up by a series of seminars, etc., in other cities.

Civic consciousness is both a concept as well as a matter for action. Vaguely, we all seem to know what it is all about. Yet I will not be surprised if two definitions of this concept given by two thinking citizens are found to differ widely from one-another. As the first step, it will be the task of the Seminar to

define the concept not only in its abstract and theoretical connotation but also in terms of its practical implication. The latter, of course, is far more important, for, our basic objective is to prepare a plan of action whereby we may succeed in creating better understanding and greater mutual dependence between the civic bodies and the citizens.

To my mind, civic consciousness is not merely an awareness of the rights and obligations that the citizens have *vis-a-vis* a local body. It is much more than that. It is a question of the nature of relationship between the two. Such relationship should be based on mutual understanding, responsiveness and co-operation. As in any other relationship, the responsibility for making it really meaningful and happy lies with both the parties. It is my earnest hope that this Seminar will throw up suggestions and ideas which would go a long way in enabling us to take fruitful steps towards making the relationship between our civic body and the citizens a really warm and happy one. In doing so, we would, of course, like to see the house of the civic body itself being set in order. At the same time, we should take steps to engender among the citizens an attitude of discipline, a sense of self-help and a feeling of considering the civic body—its property as well as its problems—their own.

Unfortunately, we are heir to an unhappy legacy of the alien rule which has left the ordinary citizen with a feeling of indifference, if not hostility, towards the entire governmental machinery. Hundreds of years of government by those, whose real interest could not be the welfare of the common man, have made the people at large full of scepticism, indeed, cynicism towards the various governmental bodies, whether at the local or other levels. This has to be steadily fought and eliminated and a relationship on mutual trust and confidence, understanding and cooperation needs to be established. It has been our experience that such a relationship gets established almost instantaneously and automatically whenever we are threatened by a great emergency. As the Prime Minister has observed, we, as a people, give an excellent account of ourselves when we are pushed to the wall. Thus, during the emergencies that we had to face owing to external aggression, the Corporation found an immense response from the citizens of Delhi. Similarly, during the recent 45-day long, unfortunate strike by a section of the

Municipal Safai Karamacharies, the Corporation received invaluable public cooperation in keeping the city clean enough to ward off any danger of disease or epidemic. Our endeavour has to be that the same spirit gets established even in regard to the day-to-day functioning of the civic body, which is, perhaps, even more important in the long run than the facing of the various crises which come in the life of the city once in a way.

It is our good fortune that, even though the notice was short, we have with us this morning distinguished citizens from all walks of life—Mayors of other City Corporations, Ex-Mayors of Delhi, Members of Parliament, Metropolitan Council, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Delhi Development Authority and New Delhi Municipal Committee, eminent representatives of major national newspapers and leaders in the fields of education, social welfare, politics and the professions. I am confident that this Seminar will get a flying start with the inspiring message which you, Sir, will be leaving with us and which the distinguished participants will take as the starting point of the important deliberations in which they are taking part. I would like to assure you Mr. Vice-President and this distinguished gathering that we will give the fullest respect to the conclusions of this Seminar and take all possible steps to put them into practice.

Hon'ble Vice-President, it is a matter of good fortune for us that you have so much interest in the activities of the local bodies in Delhi and have always been generous whenever we have made demands upon your precious time. It is natural, therefore, that we feel extremely happy in extending to you a very warm and thankful welcome. I also take this opportunity to extend a hearty welcome to our other distinguished guests, who have taken all the trouble to be with us for participating in this Seminar and giving their valuable time. With these words I once again welcome you and request you kindly to bless this Seminar with your inaugural address.

CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

Mohit Bhattacharya

The subject of the seminar is such that it can be discussed very generally with considerable vagueness. Alternatively, one can look at it as a basic theme which touches upon the core of democracy itself. It is expected that the seminar would be following the second approach. The problem of civic consciousness is essentially one of social psychology. In the municipal context, it needs to be examined why the citizens in our municipal areas behave in particular ways in relation to local civic problems. Obviously, this question is of crucial importance, as democracy at any level postulates active citizens' interest and participation in public affairs. This quality of the citizen was best expressed in Pericle's Funeral Speech:

"Here (in Athens) each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well: even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well-informed on general politics...this is a peculiarity of ours: we do not say that man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all."¹

In municipal sphere, citizens' interest in local affairs is an invaluable asset for local administration. Unlike the higher levels of government, municipal government is closest to the people, and it is this intimate government-citizen nexus that justifies the existence of local government. Mere casting of a vote to elect a city government is no evidence of civic consciousness. It may, however, be mentioned that the turn out of voters in our municipal elections is fairly high compared to the consistent trend in

¹Thucydides, *The Paloponesian War* (Translated by Rex Warner), The Penguin Classics, pp. 118-19.

England and the USA towards low electoral participation in local election.

Civic consciousness exhibits itself in intelligent citizens' interest in civic affairs. The question that needs to be asked is: do we have this kind of interest in our citizens? And if this interest is absent, how to create it among the bulk of our citizens?

VALUE COMMITMENTS

Man has been characterised as a 'political animal'. But it is doubtful if ordinary men and women feel interested in political matters. Even in developed democracies like England and the USA, sustained popular interest in public affairs is lacking. A cross-national study on 'Civic Culture' reveals interesting data about individual attitude to local community activities.² It can be seen from the responses in Table below that the citizens in the USA and the UK have shown considerable interest in active participation in local community activities. The Italian citizens score the least and the Germans and Mexicans also do not show much enthusiasm. It may not be wrong to say that the participatory attitude is a visible demonstration of a political value cherished by an average American or Briton. Possibly, the stability of the political systems in these two nations may be attributed to this kind of value commitments of ordinary citizen.

WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE ORDINARY MAN PLAY IN HIS LOCAL COMMUNITY, BY NATION (IN PER CENT)

<i>Person who choose</i>	<i>US</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Mexico</i>
Active participation in Local Community	59	43	26	11	26

Source : Collected from Table 2 of Chapter 6 of *The Civic Culture*.

²Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Princeton University Press, 1963, Ch. 6.

ATTACHMENT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY

An interesting community attitude survey in England brings out that participation in local government activities and local public service is wider among men, older electors and residents of longer standing in the area, people in upper socio-economic groups, persons living in local authority areas of smaller population size and persons of 'higher' and 'secondary' educational levels.³ This survey also reveals that nearly four in five electors claim to possess some feelings of attachment to a 'home' community area, which in urban authority areas would mean an area as being of a size no larger than the equivalent of a ward.⁴ We have very little empirical data of similar kind in this country. What the English survey reveals about the bigger urban areas might be true in our situation also. In the mental map of an ordinary citizen, it is the neighbourhood area which is clearly set. The vast sprawling city and its myriad civic problems are far beyond his range of immediate perception.

CULTURE GAP

Cities throughout the world are complex sociological phenomena. There are diverse types of people and culture thrown together in space. The sense of community is greatly diluted in the urban air of anonymity. In India, due to linguistic, religious and community diversities individuals in large cities like Delhi, Calcutta or Bombay tend to move within their narrow community groups. Unless a locality has a culturally homogeneous population, it is doubtful if the people in the locality would intermix socially. Instances are quite common where individuals tend to look at the city merely as a place for earning money and they would ultimately go back to the distant villages or towns to which they originally belong. Loyalty to the city grows out of continual urban living; but many of our urbanites have still their firm roots in remote villages or small towns. As regards attachment to municipal government, the citizens in general exhibit an attitude of aloofness, even hostility at times, which is a peculiar

³Royal Commission on Local Government in England, Research Studies No. 9, *Community Attitudes Survey*, England, London, HMSO, 1969, pp. 73-4.

⁴*Ibid*, p. 3.

personality trait possibly reared by the primary social groups such as the family and the communal group. What is often overlooked is that the attitude to municipal government is a demonstrable evidence of a sceptical mind which suspects the bona fides of democracy as such at all levels of government. Democracy is more than a mere form of government. It is a way of living and an integral part of what is called 'culture'. We are yet to fully evolve this culture.

HINDRANCES TO CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Turning now to the obstacles to good citizenship, I would like to point out a few major impediments. It is easy to be dissatisfied with citizens who keep their water taps running or who are careless about sanitation. If we look closely into their behaviour, we would perhaps discover in many cases traces of left overs of a low rural culture. The attitude to water use or noisy living can be a hang-over of the rural past. Public attitude to city sanitation is a typical instance of general apathy to public problems. What belongs to everybody belongs really to nobody. So, why care about litters or garbage? In majority of cases, lack of sense of sanitation has its deep roots in personal living. For, it is rare that a person is sanitation-minded at home and different outside.

Poverty

One of the major impediments to good citizenship is poverty. We need not reel out statistics to prove the appalling living conditions in all over big cities. With the exception of a small minority of affluent class, the public in general have been used to facing almost a perennial scarcity of essential civic amenities like water, roads, schools, even burial grounds. On top of it, slums are an endemic phenomenon like festering sores, where urban poverty assumes the ugliest scene. Good citizenship cannot come out of bad living environment. Our urban slums are the burial grounds of civic consciousness.

Administrative Inefficiency

The alienated citizen is also, to a large extent, a direct result of municipal administrative inefficiency. Municipal administration works within many known constraints. Yet, the average

citizen can be won over through the efficient delivery of essential civic services. A good park, a good road, adequate water supply, a timely sanction of building plan—all these are the direct routes to the citizens' heart. Several studies have been made in this country on municipal administration. They have come out with the same conclusion that our municipal administration is far from satisfactory. The situation has been very clearly brought out in an official Committee report recently :

"In their discussions with the experts in administrative and academic fields, officials and public men, the Committee noticed a sense of despair and lack of confidence in the capacity of the local bodies to tackle the problems that face towns and cities. It is complained that the management of municipal affairs is very much dominated by group and party politics. It is also alleged that the sanction of various development works is delayed because of the anxiety of the councillors to benefit sectional interests. The image of the local body in the public mind is that of inefficiency, maladministration, delay and corruption. Such an image and the poor performance of functions by the local bodies have further accentuated the indifference of citizens towards the affairs of the local government."⁵

The surest way of winning the confidence of citizens is to make municipal administration service-oriented. Red-tapism and rigid bureaucratism are in a way incompatible with local government administration. Promptness and a greater degree of informality are naturally expected of municipal administration because of its location at the local community level.

Administration Fragmentation

In our bigger urban complexes such as Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and others, there are two other important factors that stand in the way of citizen-municipal administration understanding. One of these is the fragmentation of administration of civic services. Instead of keeping a range of allied civic services in the hands of a single, compendious municipal government, the general tendency in India is to create a number

⁵ *Report of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee*, Vol. I, Ministry of Health and Family Planning, Government of India, 1966, p. 109.

of competitive local authorities—mostly without any popular base—each having control over specific functions. From the planning and administrative points of view, fragmentation poses serious problems of coordination. But its effect on the citizens' minds is far more injurious. To the ordinary citizen, it is easier to understand a municipal authority rendering almost all civic functions. When the administration of local services is parcelled out among a large number of authorities, the administrative map appears naturally confusing to the citizens. The fragmentation of local administration often leads to the weakening of popularly elected municipal institutions. It is small wonder that people in general have little attachment to weak municipal government.

Shape of Local Government

The other point follows almost as a corollary. Presently, the shape of local administration in our major urban complexes is an impediment to civic consciousness. Citizens' awareness of civic problems cannot be generated in a vacuum. It is through available opportunities for involvement that consciousness grows. What is hinted at is that citizens will be able to participate more actively in municipal activities provided our municipal government in the metropolitan areas like Delhi or Calcutta is suitably remodelled in order to facilitate more citizens' participation in municipal affairs. The zonal committees in Delhi, Borough Committee in Calcutta and 'ward' administration in Bombay are half-hearted attempts to bring administration closer to the localities. What is needed is a thorough overhaul of the present messy administration at the city level where authorities are competing with each other in the running of cognate civic services. After gathering together almost all the civic functions in one single municipal authority, a system of two-tier municipal government may be tried out on the federal principles of distribution of powers between the centre and its constituent units. With elective government at the local level and the city level, the scope for popular participation is sure to widen. This will also facilitate the emergence of strong municipal government which cannot but attract the attention of lay citizens. In this connection we quote a very apposite observation by Prof. W.A. Robson, an acknowledged authority on city

government:

"The expedients which have been introduced in metropolitan areas to overcome the difficulties of local government without drastic reform have produced an extra-ordinary tangle of areas and authorities. The medley of uncoordinated units which exists outside the narrow boundaries of the city proper, the welter of ad hoc authorities set up to administer a whole series of services, add to the sense of confusion, incoherence and disharmony in the mind of the average citizen when he thinks about the government of the great city in which he lives. How can we expect to find in the minds of men and women that sense of identity on which community is founded if we do nothing to develop and express it through appropriate political institutions?"⁶

Role of Communication

Last but not least, civic consciousness is ill-developed in our country due largely to lack of any regular system of communication between the citizen and municipal administration. The administration treats the citizens as inert objects or automatons that would accept every thing thrust on them. Our billing system tells us about the amount to be paid, but explains little how the amount has been reached. We ask the citizen to pay rates, but do not bother to tell him how the money is being spent and on what. Civic plans and developments are hardly based on what the people really want. Civic consciousness grows out of information feeding. Through different communication media like radio, television, leaflets, brochures, journals, meetings and group discussions, the citizens need to be informed about the civic problems, plans and developments. Many corporations have established public relations departments and are publishing civic journals at regular intervals. Generally speaking, these efforts tend to become routinised administration and their value in

⁶William A. Robson and D.E. Regan (ed.), *Great Cities of the World*, Vol. I, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1972, p. 90.

creating civic consciousness remains suspect.⁷ Yet communicating with the citizen is an area which has vast potentialities for development. Imaginative handling of the communication media might yield spectacular results by way of civic consciousness, as an informed citizen can alone turn out to be a conscious citizen.

⁷Two research studies conducted in the Indian Institute of Public Administration report lack of awareness among the citizens about procedural requirements for the installation of civic services. See A.P. Barnabas, *The Experience of Citizens in Getting Water Connections*, 1965, New Delhi, IIPA; and V. Jagannadham and N.S. Bakshi, *Citizen and the Municipal Bureaucracy*, 1971, IIPA, New Delhi.

ROLE OF A DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES IN PROMOTING CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

R. M. Varma.

Civic consciousness may be defined as the "existence of a positive feeling of responsibility in the citizens and a willingness to take action for the preservation and/or improvement of civic amenities to ensure better living conditions for all those who comprise the city." The words 'civic consciousness' are probably as old as the first human conglomeration that exhibited some of the characteristics of urban life and which required its members, formally or otherwise, to follow some kind of behaviour that would assist the maintenance of the civic amenities at a desired level. The need for the inculcation of such behaviour obviously arose because urban living implies the presence of unfamiliar people on familiar spots in almost all the aspects of one's life at work, at leisure or even at home. Thus, unless there was some built-in restraint or a kind of a code of urban ethics, it was not unusual to expect the so called 'stranger' to delve in some kind of action, voluntary or otherwise, that could detract from the well-being of the neighbourhood and, subsequently, the city itself. This is not to exonerate the members of the local population itself who quite often made life more miserable for not only those around them but also even for themselves either by omitting to take some action or committing some action that, slowly but surely, hindered the effective provision and the utilization of civic amenities.

As cities grew in size over a period of time, the civic administration also grew both in terms of size and the responsibilities that it took upon itself or was prevailed upon to take up in order to keep the city functioning properly. This growth in size of both the city and the civic administration, however, has not

been followed necessarily by a corresponding development of civic consciousness which somehow seems to have been largely left to the discretion of the individual citizens.

In the above context, it is illuminating to contrast the manner in which the growth of the human child is looked after by the parents with the manner in which the city is attended to by those responsible for its functioning. In case of the former, all possible attention is given by the parents on the physical as well as psycho-social aspects in order to ensure that the child develops a healthy and likeable personality. It is, perhaps, no exaggeration to say that the latter, *i.e.*, the city, also goes through the same process as the former in terms of its physical and psycho-social growth. In its case, however, it is interesting to find that those responsible for its growth and orderly functioning usually appear to lay the maximum emphasis on the improvement of its physical appearance. The psycho-social development aspects are, thus, more often than not, left to providence and get some attention only when some kind of crisis looms ahead.

One wonders to what extent the parents of a child would be happy to rear a hulking giant as their offspring, one who would grow like the genie in Aladin's lamp and who, instead of obeying their commands, would develop a ravenous appetite merely in order to survive, forcing the parents to constantly make frantic efforts to preserve its life and, at the same time, to prevent its going berserk. It would indeed be most dreadful for the parents to bring up a child having a tremendous potential for physical growth but without possession or having insufficient possession of the faculties that could enable it to exercise control over its behaviour. Such an organism may, perhaps, have an attractive physical appearance to begin with. However, being devoid of a soul and having inadequate mental make up to regulate itself, it would be little better than an untrained animal which can effectively obliterate all the attributes that made it look attractive in the beginning—something like the fast growing tiny tot who will spoil his make-up, no matter how good it is, innumerable times since he can not appreciate its value. This, indeed, may be said to be the story of the growth and development of most cities in spite of the best intention of town planners and civic administrators. In this regard, it is interesting to observe that the major concern of the former has, till late, been with architectural

design and aesthetics while the latter has, time and again, reflected the tendency to be bogged down by bureaucratic elements assisted unconsciously or otherwise by the capers of the elected representatives of the people whose major interest seems to lie primarily in assuring their continuance in positions of power. Under the circumstance, it is no wonder that the city gets all set for chaotic development.

Before attempting an answer to such a mighty problem, it may be useful to draw an analogy between the city and the human body. It is a well known fact that whenever the human body is faced with an invasion by foreign bodies like bacteria etc., anti-bodies develop automatically to counter them and, unless the invasion from outside is too strong, the body is able to resume its normal functioning in a short while without any assistance from outside and without taxing the brain. This function of offering resistance to undesirable elements varies from person to person, being strongest in people with good health and poorest in those who are weak. The city also behaves in an almost identical manner. Such cities where the citizen and the civic administration take a pride in maintaining their habitat in the best possible manner, it will be rather difficult for any newcomer (like the bacteria in the human body) to indulge in behaviour that is not in conformity with what others expect of him. Either he will have to follow the accepted norms of civic behaviour or he will find that he is forced, sooner or later, to leave the neighbourhood and/or the city itself. On the other hand, like the weak or diseased body, if the existing patterns of life in the city are conducive to the growth of a disintegrated and disinterested population, there are limitless opportunities for the people to make things unbearable for decent living. The reference here obviously covers both the migrants who may have arrived recently in the city, unaware of the requirements of urban living, and those urban ruralites who, in spite of having lived in the city for decades, still refuse to treat it as their home, for whom home means some remote village where they may have been born or which they may be visiting once in a year or two. Since such individuals do not view the city as their home, they feel least concerned to keep it in a manner in which they may want their home to be. In other words, unless there is some sense of belong-

the chances for their involvement in the maintenance and improvement of the civic life are very few.

A sense of belonging to the city is probably the first prerequisite to the development of civic consciousness since one is moved to action far more easily when someone to whom he belongs or something that is near and dear to him is in danger of being affected adversely. It is also a fact that one wishes to belong to the comparatively better things of life and a city is no exception to this dictum. As a consequence, it is logical to say that every city should have at least such civic amenities whose absence would be a source of producing tension in the people's mind almost continuously. The implication is that the local self government has to be always prepared on a war footing to counter any action that jeopardizes the status quo. This is not to say that the civic administration does not take urgent action or is incapable of taking urgent action when needed. What is often forgotten, however, is that such 'urgent action' takes place more often when there is some pressure from a VIP, delays in the implementation and/or restoration of services happening more often in case of requests made by the common man. The very pace and/complexity of urban life makes severe demands on the individual's mental and emotional make up in a variety of ways. As a result, it is too much to expect the layman to tackle the civic administration repeatedly over a prolonged period. When results are slow to come by, the most civic minded enthusiast is bound to be disheartened. Under such circumstances, it is too much to expect him or others, even less interested in civic affairs, to develop any sense of belonging to their neighbourhood or the city as a whole if the drains stink, the street lights remain out of order or the tap gives forth only a trickle of water, a situation where complaints are the order of the day with no one exactly knowing the way out of the dilemma.

The comments made above are not intended to convey a feeling that it is the civic administration alone which can make or mar the city. Admittedly, the urban dwellers have an equal, if not more important, role to play in shaping life in the city. It is here that we may recall the analogy described earlier between the city and the human body. As the human being grows, apart from the natural endowments that protect it from harm.

he is also taught to defend himself against unwarranted circumstances. Similarly, if the citizens of a city, corresponding to the protective elements of the human body, were assisted to recognize the symptoms of impending trouble, in course of time, they can be expected to develop a sense of responsibility that is almost instinctive, a reaction pattern comparable to the manner in which the human hand flashes forward to save the persons from being hurt when it slips or when some harmful object is seen heading its way. Like the white blood corpuscles, the trained citizens would not only possess the necessary knowledge to prevent the emergence of a host of civic problems but would also develop the strength to tackle them to the best of their capabilities.

A pessimist may regard the foregoing ideas to be wishful thinking. As a matter of fact, there are many who feel that the task of civic improvement should not be entrusted to the citizens since the urban population is heterogenous and, accordingly, there would be little or no consensus in the people as to the mode in which improvement should be brought about. They try to support their arguments with facts and figures that highlight the urban diversity in terms of levels of education, income, cultural background, etc. Some of them also put forth the dubious claim that the Indian masses do not really appreciate the value of a democratic way of life and, to that extent, can best be handled by authoritative means. At the face of it and in view of the many examples quoted by such individuals, one may at times be tempted to accept some of their arguments. However, the answer to the proponents of such thinking can again be found in the analogy of the city and the human body. As we know, the various parts of the body are extremely diverse in the way they derive nourishment from it and, in turn, serve it. Each component, however, is dependent upon the other for its survival. It is this inter-dependence which is also the hallmark of urban living and as long as ways and means exist to assure the smooth operation of the various parts, their sum total can be expected to be reasonably harmonious. As far as the question of using authoritative means is concerned, one must remember that any law is successful only to the extent to which (a) the administration is willing to implement it scrupulously and (b) the people cooperate with it. While some more would be said in this context

later on, it will suffice to say at this juncture that emphasis on the large scale use of authoritative means to force people to act in a certain manner rests on a premise they preclude any faith in the people's capacity to help themselves, a premise that is unacceptable by any standard. Besides, a city is too large a unit for any civic administration to exercise its authority, even if it so wished, in all pervasive manner.

In spite of the fact that harmonious city life is possible only when the components comprising the city *i.e.* the inhabitant, and the civic administration, are willing to work hand in hand, it is most unfortunate that both seem to be in the grip of a vicious circle wherein the citizens hold a negative view of the civic administration and the services rendered by it whereas the latter looks upon the citizens as unhelpful. At the face of it, there does not appear to be an easy way out. Nevertheless, like the brain in the human body, one should logically expect the civic administration to take steps to break the vicious circle. It is only afterwards that people can be expected to extend their cooperation. The question is, "How does one go about it?" As mentioned earlier, creation of a sense of belonging is the first pre-requisite to the creation of civic consciousness. As far as the civic administration is concerned, some of the more important ways in which it can hope to bring it about are suggested forthwith for consideration.

To begin with, urgent steps should be taken to speed up the settlement of complaints, claims etc., made by the citizens. The individual should not be made to feel that his voice will be heard only if he goes out of his way or when he is assisted by some one else who can pull strings. The most classic example that can be quoted in this regard is that of the layout maps of various kinds of dwellings, their clearance, at times, taking months or even years. As things get delayed, the applicants get restless to the extent that either they think of short cutting the red tape through under-hand tactics or they go ahead and build the structure in any way they please, in which case they may often be fined or be forced to either demolish the structure or get it accepted by bribing some official. In any case, such delays are often a source of tremendous hardship to people for some, it means inadequate shelter, for the others it may mean the payment of additional interest on the amount they might

have borrowed for purpose of building a house. It is surely not conducive to the creation of faith in the civic administration. The same picture often obtains with regard to complaints that pertain to the orderly running of civic amenities, e.g., sewage, street lighting, water supply, etc.

Secondly, all possible efforts should be made to educate the people in regard to the significance of their actions *vis-a-vis* the maintenance and improvement of civic amenities. Many find it hard to believe that urban dwellers may not know as to how omission or commission on their part can lead to deterioration in the living standards of their neighbourhood or even to the loss of limb or life. Often we observe people throwing all kinds of rubbish in the drains. Sooner or later, the drains which are not meant to handle such rubbish, become choked and overflow, making life miserable particularly in such cases where the sullage water spreads itself on the lanes or roads or even enters the houses people live in. Open manholes are not uncommon sight. While some may have been left temporarily open by the staff on duty, others remain open since someone stole them. In many cases, they result in serious injury to the people who fall in the manhole since they could not see it either because of darkness or because it was not visible due to overflowing sullage or rain water. In like manner, very few citizens ever realize or bother to think that misuse of or damage to the civic services has to be paid for through their own pockets sooner or later. How many people bother to close a running public water hydrant or to report in case the tap is broken or stolen? It sounds easy to say that all that an individual has to do is to report the matter to the concerned department and necessary action would follow. I wonder if we realize that even a phone call to the concerned department requires both time and money (if one is lucky to have a public call office nearby in working order and has the necessary coins besides remembering the number of the department) or more if he calls from some nearby shop (if the latter permits him) to complete the job. As far as going to the concerned department is concerned, both time and distance bar it effectively. Consequently, the concerned department may come to know about the event only after the situation

of filtered water are lost. This is not to mention the inconvenience it causes to the housewives in the nearby area who may find the pressure of water in their taps to be low since the public water hydrants are at the ground level while the domestic supply is often located higher up. The same holds true for damaged street lights, broken drains and a host of other similar situations. One way in which this could be overcome is to allot phone number to the complaints department of the local self government which could be dialled without cost so that the hesitation to save a few paise would be removed. Even if such calls are to be debited to the concerned department, it is better to do so rather than be penny wise and pound foolish. It is the author's conviction that such a measure can save a tremendous lot of wastage and other associated headaches to the civic administration apart from restoring the citizens' confidence in it to some degree.

The efforts proposed to be made to educate the citizens should also cover the fact that omission or commission of certain acts on their part also forces them to pay more taxes in return for poorer service on account of the reason that more money needs to be spent all the time on the mere maintenance of the existing services which are usually strained to the limit due to the ever increasing urban population. It also retards the rate of progress of the plans made by the civic administration for brining about improvement in its services in the future since a sizable part of the resources earmarked for development have to be diverted towards the preservation of the existing level of services.

It is my firm belief that a public relations programme geared to educate the citizenry about all the above mentioned aspects can pay rich dividends. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that the programme of public relations is so designed as not only to tell the individual the consequences of his action or inaction but also to indicate the expected action. This brings us to the question of the stage at which people's involvement should be sought. The simple answer is, 'catch them young'. The schools at all levels are the best place to help children develop civic consciousness. Great care needs to be exercised, however, to prevent the information in this regard from becoming boring. An ideal role in this context can be

played by a trained social worker who, apart from helping the children to adjust to the school in his capacity as the 'school social worker,' could also impart the knowledge about civic education through informal group sessions, making effective use of other activities to make the learning process acceptable and helping the children to 'internalize civic values'. Such an arrangement can also avoid the necessity of drilling the children in civic manners through monotonous lessons on civics in text books that are, more often than not, dull and viewed by the students as a 'pain in the neck'. The best medium for this purpose will, of a necessity, have to be audio-visual. Furthermore, a very substantial part of the public relations programme will have to be oriented towards the older population in each city in order to achieve concrete results.

Thirdly, much would depend upon the action that the various departments of the civic administration are willing to undertake in support of the image that will be projected through any public relations programme. Any effort made through public relations can be easily thwarted if it is found to be without substance. As a matter of fact, in such a situation, continuance of public relation communication without adequate support in terms of action programmes can easily backfire, making people develop an attitude of mockery towards the civic administration. As far as the taking up of action is concerned, it is proposed that the various departments of the civic administration should give serious thought to develop blue prints for the future that are realistic not only in terms of the finances and the personnel supposed to be available in the future but also in terms of the extent and the manner in which they could seek people's cooperation for the most effective possible implementation. Specifically, it is suggested that the needs and/or the problems facing each municipal ward and zone (later on the city as a whole) should be worked out as follow :

- (a) Those which are solely or primarily the responsibility of the civic administration;
- (b) those which can be jointly tackled by the civic administration and the citizens; and
- (c) those which may be said to be the sole or the primary responsibility of the people themselves.

It is felt that a classification of the needs and the problems and, subsequently, the projects envisaged to meet the same along the lines mentioned above may provide a much more workable model for civic improvement than otherwise. Such a classification would also be of considerable help in determining (a) the objectives of the proposed public relations programme and (b) the groups to whom it should be addressed in terms of the activities that are to be implemented. Such a line of action would logically help not only in pin pointing specific groups in the general public that need to be covered but also some such groups who have traditionally (and, perhaps, incorrectly) never been thought to need any public relations, specifically, the staff of the civic administration itself which is quite sizable in number. Having determined the tasks before itself and the groups that need to be involved and/or are going to be affected by the same, a logical corollary is to keep the people informed of the plans made and the progress there about as it takes place over a period of time. This would help in the creation of a sense of movement, so vital for creating people's confidence in the civic administration.

Fourthly, it should be endeavoured to implement the existing rules and regulations regarding the provision and maintenance of civic amenities in a firm manner. There is little doubt that many of the troubles faced by the urban dwellers arise simply because some people do not obey the civic rules and regulations.

It is a fact that people are often unaware of the technicalities of such rules and regulations. Yet, it is also equally true that indulgence in acts detrimental to the enjoyment of satisfactory urban living continues because the functionaries responsible for implementing the law often appear to take a more lenient view than is warranted. The situation appears to be similar to that of the traffic constable who may note down the numbers of a large number of erring motor vehicles and yet who submits to the authorities only a few who obviously irritated him more than the rest. One need not make a mention here of the 'gratification' in lieu of which certain officials may permit minor violations pertaining to the building or the sanitary laws or a host of other areas where some check has to be exercised by the civic administration. In many instances, the official receiving the 'favour' may oblige the patron by pointing out to him the loophole in

the rules and regulations. Not infrequently, some of the worst offenders in this regard are some of the elected members of the civic body who often pride themselves in being able to 'legalize the illegal' in return for a few votes. As long as the civic bodies and the citizens tolerate such violations, to quote from a long list of civic hazards, unauthorised colonies will continue to crop up, harmful industrial units will keep on functioning in residential areas, foods injurious to health will continue to be sold in the market, dirt and filth would accumulate and the city will continue to be a nightmare for its inhabitants. In regard to the above, in case it is felt that existing rules and regulations are too cumbersome or unworkable, they ought to be repealed and fresh rules framed so that the civic administration can function more effectively and bring the culprits to book.

It is felt that if the four point programme suggested in the foregoing pages is taken up by the civic administration, there should be little difficulty in inculcating positive attitudes in the people's mind towards the civic body and the services provided by it. In turn, it would be definitely conducive to the creation of a sense of belonging in the citizens towards a city that strives to better itself on all fronts with 'their' cooperation. This brings us to the other pre-requisite for the creation of civic consciousness, i.e., the existence of opportunities for people to participate in maintaining the city, starting from one's own neighbourhood, in peak form. It is here that the role of the Department of Community Services becomes paramount. By its very nature, the civic administration touches more people, more often at more points, than any other kind of administration. Yet, within its fold, it is the Department of Community Services which is closest to the people since its staff has to be in direct contact with the local population and leaders.

What, then, is the specific role of the Department of Community Services in promoting civic consciousness? To begin with, a most crucial role that it can play consists of facilitating communications between the civic administration and the people. On the one hand, it can be done by the creation of Citizen's Advisory Bureaux under the Department designed to offer assistance to the inhabitants of different zones not only regarding the numerous problems faced by them *vis-a-vis* the civic administration but also by finding suitable answers to a host of other

problems that one encounters in urban life. The Community Services Department in Delhi, for instance, has considerable experience in organizing this activity and it would be a pity not to utilize the experience gained so far in this regard to put the activity on a still more sound footing. Handled carefully, it is not impossible to envisage such Bureaux to become extremely important centres of exchange of information covering the people and the civic administration. On the other hand, the Department should also be helped to take over the task of implementing the public relations programme of the civic body with the purpose of educating the masses about the significance of their action or inaction and stressing the need on their part for action that could make life better for them.

The analogy drawn in the beginning of this paper between the human body and the city holds true in case of the civic administration as well. Like the human body, the civic administration also grows, both in size as well as the volume of responsibilities that it can and ought to carry out. Again, it is made up of numerous components (the various departments), all inter-dependent and each one contributing its might to the survival of the organization. Once we accept this idea, it stands to reason that the Department of Community Services should act as the eyes and ears of the civic body so as to help and guide the limbs to pursue the chosen path safely. It would be unfortunate indeed if the various organs of the body fought among themselves for supremacy and yet, this seems to be the story of the various parts of the civic administration where each department tries to demonstrate its importance *vis-a-vis* the others. In this tussle, the Community Services Department often stands to lose, not because its function is unimportant but because the others have played their role for much longer periods due to which their identity becomes easier to establish. One wonders why, in this age of specialization, the other departments find it hard to accept that they should excel in the function of providing the services while the communication and interpretation of their services should be left to the Community Services Department since the latter is closest to the people. As cities grow in size, the administrators in-charge of various departments are likely to find that their contacts with the people are prone to become increasingly remote, why, then, this hesitation to give the Community Service

Department the function that it alone could handle effectively which, in course of time, would also make for more efficient rendering of services by other departments?

Another vital role that can be played by the Community Services Department in promoting civic consciousness revolves around the involvement of citizens in running at least some of the civic services at the neighbourhood level. Carried to its logical extreme, it can even mean that some of the municipal functionaries operating at the neighbourhood level may have to become responsible to a locally elected person for the efficient running of the services. While such an arrangement would help the municipal staff to be more responsive to local needs, it would also help in marshalling the people's cooperation far more easily to meet any difficult situation since they would feel themselves to be much closer to the civic administration.

Over the years, the department of Community Services has also been performing the function of following up people's complaints *vis-a-vis* various departments particularly in cases where the problem have been of long standing nature or are recurrent. While it is an important function, the Department should, nevertheless, refrain from becoming a 'clearing house' for complaints about other departments. A clear understanding in this regard would go a long way in avoiding inter-departmental misunderstandings which could easily crop up at any point of time.

Probably the most important role of this Department consists of promoting the ideal of self-help. It is through this ideal that this department can not only assist the civic administration indirectly by preventing damage to the existing services but also extend direct help in executing some of the projects where the civic administration would need to work hand in hand with the citizens. Again, in the same context, given sufficient support, it would not be an impossible task for such a department to assist the civic administration even in the task of town planning if the need so arose. This can be accomplished through the creation of an enlightened population which may be willing to even relocate itself provided it has enough faith in the civic administration's ability to provide it with the necessary civic amenities, aided, of course, in this task by the Department of

Community Services which could be helpful in making the task of relocation as smooth as possible through direct contact with the people.

In the end, it may be pointed out that the pace at which the cities are growing is enormous. Under a democratic set-up, it is next to impossible to prevent people from migrating to a place of their choice. The solution obviously lies in creating civic consciousness and this can best be done by a department which has the most direct contact with the people and a department of Community Services is tailor made for such a role. In its absence, the civic administration would find it difficult, if not impossible, to exercise effective control over the ever-growing city.

CITIZENS' GRIEVANCES AGAINST CIVIC BODIES : THE CASE OF DELHI

L. P. Gupta

What is the image of the Delhi Municipal Corporation and the NDMC in the minds of citizens? What type of grievances do they have? The daily *Statesman*, published from Delhi, contains a column every Friday, entitled 'We have a grievance, Sir'.

By its very nature this column can be utilised only by an extremely limited number of citizens. The vast majority of illiterate and semi-literate people are not in a position to write. It is only highly educated citizens—particularly those with a flair for writing—who can make good use of this column.

Secondly, this column is not meant exclusively for grievances against the Delhi Municipal Corporation or the NDMC. We find in these columns grievances against the Life Insurance Corporation, Delhi Transport Corporation, Delhi Milk Scheme, Electricity Supply Undertaking, Post and Telegraph Department, Delhi Development Authority, Delhi Police and numerous other agencies and organisations.

The VIPs, and other influential citizens need not write in this column. Conspicuous by his absence is the 'common man' or the 'man on the street' perhaps because he has been forced to adopt the 'culture of silence'.

And yet a cross-section of letters appearing in the 'Grievances' column do give an idea of where the shoe pinches. The authorities of the Delhi Municipal Corporation and the NDMC will do well to try their best to redress these grievances at their earliest possible convenience.

A cursory look at the letters published in the above column during the last five months reveals that most of the grievances

against the Delhi Municipal Corporation or the NDMC relate to:

- (i) Unhygienic and insanitary conditions obtaining in different localities.
 - (ii) Water scarcity in different areas
 - (iii) Upkeep and maintenance of roads (with particular reference to the maintenance of pot-holes)
 - (iv) Drainage
 - (v) Encroachment
 - (vi) House-Tax Assessment
 - (vii) Street Lights
 - (viii) Smoke nuisance
 - (ix) Cattle nuisance
 - (x) Repairs where none was necessary while worse places go unattended.
 - (xi) Lack of transport and communication facilities
 - (xii) Lack of medical facilities
 - (xiii) Lack of educational facilities
 - (xiv) Lack of recreational facilities
- (Extracts from letters may be seen in the Appendix.)

Most of the grievances ventilated in the paper are genuine. In the development and administration of public utility services, they have an important place and the Corporation and NDMC staff should exercise more vigilance. It will be desirable to set up a proper machinery to look into citizens' grievances and redress them speedily and effectively because the common man will judge all policies and plans "from the reality of his own living conditions and opportunities and the problems encountered from day to day".

However, mere establishment of such a machinery is not enough. What is required is a much more effective communication between the Corporation and the NDMC on the one hand and the people on the other. Citizens have to be educated to play a constructive role and lend their helping hand in the building up of a better environment.

APPENDIX

A correspondent¹ focuses the attention of the authorities to the *unhygienic conditions* at Ashoka Police Lines. He complains that the sewer lines of this colony remain choked for at least 25 days a month. This overflowing filthy water reaches the kitchen walls, making it a hell to enter the kitchens. The constant dampness in the flats, he is afraid, may cause the walls to collapse, thus endangering the lives of residents. The overhead water tanks which were replaced with new ones about a year ago, he says, are without float valves, causing gallons of filtered water to over-flow and go to waste. While NDMC has been making repeated appeals regarding the shortage of filtered water, the CPWD people say that the float valves are out of stock.

Citizens from Nizamuddin and Janakpuri complain that their colonies are neglected. The grievance from Janakpuri² is that there is no police post or a post office nearby. There is no market in the colony and the residents have to travel two kms. to buy their daily necessities. No medical aid is available nearby. Another grievance is that in Janakpuri, the biggest residential colony in New Delhi developed by the DDA, there is not a single public call office with the result that in case of any urgent need one has to go to Tilak Nagar, three miles away to make a telephone call. It is strange, says the correspondent³, that in easily accessible areas like Connaught Place and Karol Bagh, public call offices are placed at every 50 yards, while in the remote colony like Janakpuri the authorities are unwilling to instal even a few of them. The same correspondent⁴ has again pointed out the lack of a central drainage system, postal, telegraph and

¹Statesman, 4 August, 1972. Shri Balbir Singh, 23 Ashok Police Lines Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.

²Statesman, 25 August, 1972. Shri C. S. Nirman, A-322, Janakpuri, New Delhi-18.

³Statesman, 17 November, 1972. Shri R. K. Jindal, Janakpuri, Pankha Road, New Delhi-18.

⁴Statesman, 15 December, 1972. Shri R.K. Jindal, Joint Secretary, 2-A (Pocket 15 and 16) Welfare Agency.

telephone facilities, medical facilities, schools/colleges, shopping centres, recreation centres and scooter/taxi stands. He says that even the main approach roads leading to the colony are extremely narrow and full of pits. Another resident⁵ points out that they have been experiencing for the past year serious water scarcity. Water, he complains, is available only for three hours a day in three instalments and people living on first floor get water only for 1½ hours.

A large number of citizens' grievances relate to the upkeep and maintenance of roads. A correspondent complains that almost all roads in R.K. Puram are in a poor state, whenever any section of a road is dug up it is invariably levelled with mud before being patched with coal-tar⁶. As a result, with the first rain the patch-work sinks and there is a depression right across the road. To another citizen⁷ it appears the authorities responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of Ring Road, especially between Dhaula Kaun and Raja Garden, are unmindful of the risk to which motorists and scooterists are put to. The road is narrow and full of pits, which he calls the death holes. It is also without light at the most crucial portion with a lot of earth and stones heaped together for repairs.

A staff Reporter⁸ has drawn the attention of the readers to the menace of *pot holes*. The roads of Delhi are little short of disgraceful. The surfaces except in a few of the very new roads are humpy, and even normal rain is enough to start the formation of a pot hole. For the driver, this means that he has to keep one eye on the road surface and the other on the traffic which is hardly conducive to safe movement. The busy roads of Delhi, he says, are worst as far as the surface is concerned. Daryaganj has a number of bumps. Panchkuin Road is full of patches. The stretch of Mathura Road near Bhogal defies description. Pusa Road is no better.

⁵Shri Om Parkash Buveja, Vice President, Janakpuri B-1 Block Welfare Association.

⁶*Statesman*, 8 December, 1972. Shri Rajesh Seth, 51/178, R. K. Puram, New Delhi-22.

⁷*Statesman*, 8 December, 1972. Shri Mukesh Mittal, M-48, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027.

⁸*Statesman*, 13 October, 1972.

The drainage system also needs drastic improvement. A moderate shower of rain can flood the roads, and every rainy season there are a number of days when traffic is disrupted. Even the existing drains are not cleared regularly so that the water stagnates instead of running off.

The quality of road repairs is also poor, the same spot keeps giving trouble. For more than five years a pot-hole has been regularly developing at the intersection near the Intercontinental Hotel. All that is done is to patch it up and wait; the process is repeated every few months.

The lack of coordination between the various departments has also taken its toll on the road. When electric, telephone or sewer lines are being laid, the road is cut at random. Bad roads, says the Reporter, are not merely traffic hazards, they also increase the maintenance cost of vehicles.

Another category of citizens' grievances relate to *encroachment*. A citizen⁹ complains that in Arya Samaj Road-Gurdwara Road, the entire pavement is occupied by scooter repairers, motor part dealers, rehri-wallahs, tikki-wallahs and so on. The poor pedestrian has no choice but to walk on the main road, where also one lane is continuously occupied by scooters and taxis waiting for customers. The position in West Patel Nagar is still worse. All rehri-wallahs who used to be inside West Patel Nagar market some months ago, now find it more convenient to sell their goods on the main road. One feels surprised that all this continues when traffic and other policemen, sometimes even Inspectors, keep a regular beat of the above places.

Some of the citizens' grievances relate to *House Tax assessment*. As pointed out by one of the correspondents,¹⁰ the Municipal Corporation of Delhi allotted 265 quarters in Vivekanand Nagar to people in the low-income group in 1967. In 1968 it was decided to fix the rental value of the quarters at Rs. 490, but when the bills came, some were billed at Rs. 490, some others at 590 and a few at Rs. 1080. When they protested they were told that those who had not filed objections were

⁹Statesman, 15 December, 1972. Shri J. C. Marwaha, D/A Kalka Colony, New Delhi-19.

¹⁰Statesman, 25 August, 1972. Shri A.K. Chopra, 377, Vivekanand Nagar, Delhi-52.

charged at Rs. 1080 and that the bills of those charged at Rs. 590 would be corrected. When they approached the higher authorities they were assured that all would be assessed at Rs. 490 and accordingly the Corporation accepted payment from all the owners. In 1969, they were served with new notices saying that the Corporation wanted to enhance the rental value from Rs. 490 to Rs. 1080. They filed objections collectively and when they approached the concerned officials they were told that due consideration would be given, but nothing has been done.

About the above grievance, a spokesman of the Municipal Corporation says¹¹ that this is a policy matter and action can only be taken according to the rules laid down.

A citizen from Nizamuddin West has¹² a grievance that the *street light* opposite his house perpetually remains out of order. Occasionally a mechanic comes and fiddles with it but with no result. This not only puts the residents of the block to great inconvenience but is also a source of danger since the road is under repair and time and again a number of cars have stuck in the mud, specially after rains.

A citizen using Shanker Road¹³ has a grievance against cow-hazard. He says that there are herds of cows in various postures of rest or unrest between the two Rajendra Nagars. He wonders why the animals cannot be rounded up and sold in villages, if they are without owners. If they have owners, their masters are guilty of causing dangerous obstructions and should be penalised.

Attention has also been drawn to the *smoke nuisance* in the grievance column. A citizen¹⁴ complains that pungent smoke from old batteries being burnt in a nearby factory lies over Model Town. It is a health hazard, but the Zonal Health Officer, he complains, is not sure whether the smoke is harmful or not.

About the above grievance, a spokesman of the Municipal

¹¹*Statesman*, 13 October, 1972.

¹²*Statesman*, 6 October, 1972. Shri D. Das Gupta, G-18.

¹³*Statesman*, 13 October, 1972. Shri W. S. Desai, WI/10, Patel Road, New Delhi-8.

¹⁴Shri S. C. Gulati, Industrial Cables (India) Ltd., Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-1.

Corporation says¹⁵ that the health officers have been instructed to prosecute those owners whose factories emit suffocating smoke.

A correspondent from Green Park has a grievance against *garage nuisance*¹⁶. He says that there is a motor garage in an unauthorised place. It is a source of considerable nuisance and a threat to the safety of children playing on the road. In spite of bringing this complaint to the notice of the Corporation repeatedly, no effective step has been taken to remove it.

About the grievance, a spokesman of the Corporation has explained¹⁷ that the auto-repair workshop has been there for quite some time. Since it operates in private premises without any Corporation licence, the owners of the garage have been prosecuted a number of times, the last time being on October 10. He says that the Corporation has no power to evict the garage owners.

President of the Citizen Welfare Society, Mehrauli¹⁸ focuses the attention of the readers on '*monumental nuisance*'. He says that the thousands who visit Mehrauli to see its monuments must be having a poor opinion of the place though the DDA and the Archaeological Department have done much to attract tourists. Poor sanitation because of lack of supervision, defective drainage, inadequate water supply, especially in the area of upper Jatwara, encroachment on the road by hawkers, monkey nuisance and inadequate bus service are among the problems that visitors and residents have to face.

President, Welfare Association, Block No. 1 (Single Story, Tilak Nagar)¹⁹ complains that the vegetable market in front of block No. 1 has resulted in bullockcarts, tempos and trucks being parked at the entrances of houses making it difficult for the residents to enter their houses. The environment, he says, is totally unhygienic. The noise makes the people spend restless days and sleepless nights. Moreover, the children cannot study in the prevailing atmosphere. He requests the authorities to shift

¹⁵Statesman, 13 October, 1972.

¹⁶Shri O.P. Jain, Y-13, Green Park, New Delhi 1.

¹⁷Statesman, 20 October, 1972.

¹⁸Statesman, 27 October, 1972. Shri Khrisan Lal.

¹⁹Statesman, 8 December, 1972. Shri Sewa Singh.

the vegetable market to the area earmarked for the purpose.

A citizen²⁰ from Lodi Colony has a grievance about *unnecessary repairs* of an infrequented road running between the 21 Block of Lodi Colony and Jor Bagh School. It beats one's imagination, he says, why anyone in the NDMC should have thought it fit to repair a road which least requires any repairs when there are so many main roads which need repairs so badly. So much of public funds are wasted over such an unnecessary work, and spoiling a pavement that is fairly usable and making it unusable.

²⁰*Statesman*, 6 October, 1972. Shri P. Vijaya Saradhi, 21/113, Lodi Colony.

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN AROUSING CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS

S. N. Rao

Civic consciousness means knowledge of the essentials of civic life and duties and rights of a good citizen. It also includes the inculcation of a spirit to contribute fully to the fulfilment of the essentials of civic life and the cultivation of habits of a good citizen in one's ownself as well as to create them in others. The need of civic consciousness is held important in all countries at all times, but in a developing country with democratic set-up its need is felt all the more.

Roughly speaking two-fifth of the population of a country consists of students and more than half of them study in schools. The student community, therefore, forms the core of citizenship in a country. Since the period of schooling is the most impressionable period of one's age, one's habit are formed in that age group. Therefore, besides home, school is the most appropriate place for formation of habits of a good citizenry.

A good citizen must be a good person. He is supposed to possess all those good qualities which a virtuous person is supposed to have. He is clean in person, in habits and in dealings. He also keeps his surroundings clean and in order. He is conscious of his duties towards his family members, neighbours, society and the country. He has a fellow feeling for all, particularly for the weaker and ailing sections of society. He respects his elders and seniors. He obeys the laws of the land and the constitutionally set-up authority. He values the human rights and privileges, guaranteed by the Constitution and contributes his mite in facilitating the process of democratic living. He not only does all this by himself but also inspires others to follow his example. Besides the home, the school can play a very

important role in the cultivation of above mentioned civic virtues in the children, who come to its portals for being educated. It is an admitted fact that, besides the mother, if there is any other person who plays the most important role in shaping the life of a student, it is the teacher. The morning prayer, the class room, the Bal Sabhas, the play field, the local excursions and the educational tours outside one's own town or city, social service camps are the places and the occasions where the teacher shapes the life of a student.

The conscientious teacher takes care to create consciousness of the importance of cleanliness in his taughts. He impresses upon them not only the importance of personal hygiene but also the cleanliness of the surroundings. At the prayer time he tells them as to why and when one's teeth should be cleaned with datun or brush and tooth paste; why one should have his nails cut; why one should have a daily bath; why one should have his clothes clean and also why one should have his surroundings in the class room, in the school; in the home, etc., quite clean. He reminds them of its importance daily and checks up whether they follow it in day to day life or not, till it becomes a firm habit in them. He illustrates this quality by observing them in his own person as well as by keeping the precincts of the school and the class room clean. He also impresses upon them the beauty of keeping things in order.

The students are taught to maintain discipline in the school and to abide by the instructions and authorities of the teachers. Whenever they go to the tap or to the classroom or to the urinal or elsewhere, they are asked to go in line quietly and also to come back in the same way. This habit in a child will enable him to observe queue system at the cinema hall, railway booking office, bus stand and elsewhere, when he grows up. Similarly, the habit of remaining in discipline will inculcate in him the habit of obeying the law and the authorities in the state and country in future. The teacher inculcates in a student a sense of patriotism by relating to him the lives of great men or by making him listen to patriotic songs or by making him sing the same. He can teach him to respect the National Flag and the National Anthem and also cultivate a sense of sacrifice for the sake of one's country and the nation in emergencies by following the example of great patriots. The audio visual aids such as charts,

painting on the walls, portraits of patriots and great men, dramas, songs full of patriotic fervour on the radio and television and the inclusion of life histories of great patriots with full emphasis on the sacrifices they made and the goals they achieved in their lives in daily lessons can prove very beneficial in inculcating the sense of patriotism among them.

To keep oneself healthy is very important in one's life. To a great extent it depends upon physical jerks, which one gives to oneself daily through physical training and playing of games and sports. It has been very well said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the play fields of Eton and Harrow. It is on the play field that a player learns the spirit of team work, forbearance and courage. The spirit of integrity and fair play is also learnt by a player by his participation in the games and sports. The play fields of the schools, therefore, can prove very useful in creating these qualities among the students.

At prayer time in the Bal Sabha as well as in the class room, teacher impresses upon the students the importance of respecting the elders and the seniors in life. This is a part of good manners. If they learn to respect their elder brothers, sisters and other senior members of the family at home and also the teachers in the school, they would learn to respect the elders and seniors everywhere when they grow up. This habit will not only endear them to all but will also earn their blessings for them.

Weaker and ailing sections of the society always deserve our attention in life. Creation of the habit of helping the poor and ailing class-fellows will develop, in due course of time, into a habit of helping similar category of people in the society. This is both a civic duty as well as an act of Divine devotion.

Education means an allround development of personality of a student. Besides, imparting knowledge through text books in the classrooms, according to the prescribed curricula, a teacher takes care to develop the dormant qualities of a student by taking personal interest in him. While taking him out on local excursions, he teaches him the traffic rules and acquaints him not only with the important historical monuments and important places of recreation but also with the various types of plants, animals and surroundings of the locality. This outing widens the horizon of knowledge of a student and creates in him a spirit of enquiry,

which is the basis of all scientific study. As a student grows up in age, the teacher takes him out on educational tours outside his city and town and acquaints him with the country he lives in. This further widens the horizon of his knowledge and enables him to make a comparative study of what he has seen in his country as compared to that what he has learnt about other countries in his lessons in the class room. This widening of the horizon of knowledge, the spirit of enquiry and a comparative study of the countries will enable the child to become an enlightened citizen. While on tour the students live in camps, which offers a very valuable opportunity for training in citizenship. Camp life brings together students of diverse background; social and economic and develop in them a sense of community living.

In day to day life in the school, a conscientious teacher teaches his students through simple methods virtues like integrity, truthfulness, sincerity of purpose, dignity of labour and humanitarian approach in life. The example of the teacher plays a far more important part than the instructions given by him.

When the students remain in the association of their teacher, the teacher finds opportunities to impress upon them the evil of bad habits such as stealing, smoking and immorality. To deepen the impression of his instructions, he quotes proper illustrations from the books as well as confronts him practical examples of persons who have suffered in life due to the above bad habits.

Thus the schools and its teachers can play a very significant role in moulding the conduct and character of a student not only into that of a good person but also a good citizen. The students, as described above, form two-fifth of a population of the society as a whole. After they grow up and become parents and get their proper place in society, they cannot only be good citizens by themselves but can also impart those virtues not only among their children but among other members of the society who come into contact with them. As such, the society as a whole can immensely benefit through the medium of school in the field of a proper civic life.

CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

S. A. Ali

Cleanliness and personal hygiene are concepts which have been more preached than practised. Where practised also, there is little thought spared for the neighbours, passersby and much less for the community. House floors may be regularly swept and washed, but without regard to accumulation of heaps of litter and pools of dirty water just in front. Our gardens and parks and other places of tourist interest are also not exempt from such thoughtless behaviour on the part of our people. We seem to be somewhat wanting a proper civic sense and community feeling. Great many of our sanitary hardships in the localities in which we work or reside, are of our own making and can be removed or lightened through concerted effort on the part of all concerned.

One important point that needs to be emphasized is the role of safai karmacharis in this connection. No community, town area or civic organization can afford to have sanitary staff that may be sufficient to keep an area clean and in good shape. Keeping an area clean is thus, by and large, a responsibility of those who live there. The safai karmacharis are there mostly to help the community in keeping its surroundings clean. The karmacharis can do little if the residents snugly shift all their responsibilities in this regard, to the small safai contingents, that can be made available to them.

Inculcation of civic sense, regard for convenience of others, fellow feeling, good neighbourliness constitute some of the essential requirements for a community's happy living. For some of us it is perhaps too late to unlearn or entirely give up the way of life we have adopted through long practice. This is not the case however, with our children and the youth. In this sphere school and college going children can play a very

important role. Our attention must, therefore, be directed towards this section of our society. Lack of cleanliness is not a phenomenon which is exclusively confined to residential or commercial area only. Our schools and colleges are also not free from that.

The training for cleanliness may be provided to children by regular school cleaning exercises by student. The programme should be graded so as to suit the different age groups and at the same time involve every one in the work at least once a week. The smaller children could have a weekly period of picking up loose papers, paper bags with elders cleaning scriblings on the walls, cleaning of desk and floors and window panes. In order to ensure its acceptability, the teachers and karmacharis should also be persuaded to give a helping hand. In course of time it may be expected that students will come to develop the practice of not only picking up loose papers and other litter that may be lying around but also not doing any thing themselves to disfigure walls or throwing litter themselves. The students, I am sure, will participate in this activity with great zeal as the programme proceeds and their efforts at keeping their school area neat and clean start bearing fruit.

As the next logical step, each school should adopt the area within which it is surrounded for its voluntary campaigns. Active participation of local residents is of utmost importance and every effort should be made to enlist the active support of leaders of public opinion of the area. Without this, all time and labour given by the school community may go waste. No very ambitious plans need be made at the initial stages and the area adopted may be increased gradually depending on the response of the locality. Students and teachers may not find it very easy going at first, but, as work proceeds on restricted scale initially it is hoped that cleanliness campaigns will acquire a measure of acceptability and some popularity also. The wards adopted by the school will in course of time come to needless assistance from their neighbourhood schools and will themselves be sufficiently prepared to make efforts to keep the locality clean with the assistance provided by the regular safai karmacharis. It may be pointed out also that this service provided by the neighbourhood school is in a way owed by it to the community which contributes funds for its up keep and maintenance.

The colleges have their own voluntary organizations of students who participate in running community services, running adult literacy classes and perform other useful jobs for people living in villages. While no classwise participation in colleges could be feasible, these voluntary organizations of students in colleges could be asked to undertake similar jobs including adoption for these purposes of the areas within which the colleges may be located. Once again, these and other similar services and facilities are to be provided with full appreciation of the fact that some returns are due to the people who in many small ways contribute in sustaining the academic programmes in the colleges.

The neighbourhood schools and colleges should be not only a matter of convenience for children and youth of the locality but also be a source of pride and affection for those who work and reside in the area.

Coming to the conservancy services, the civic authorities should provide more refuse collection receptacles and dustbins. The present system of bricked enclosures for deposition of refuse must be supplemented by large and more wide distribution of dustbins and refuse collection receptacles. There may be losses in the initial stages but even at some loss it will be worthwhile if such receptacles are provided within easy walking distance of groups of houses or shops. Many a time the refuse just lies littered for want of suitably placed municipal refuse collection bins. Use of these dustbins will also be found convenient by the safai karmacharis who may find emptying of these bins into the collection vans less laborious and time consuming.

The safai Karmacharis and the supervisory staff also need to have proper appreciation of the requirements of the localities assigned to them. Regular and proper discharge of duties on their part can make a great deal of difference to the general up-keep and cleanliness of sanitary services. A leaking water tap or a closed drain can make life miserable for quite a few households and passersby. Regular visits and efficient performance of duties of the conservancy staff would ensure not only citizens appreciation of the hard work they do, but also go a long way in producing general awareness amongst people of their own responsibilities in the matter.

In many areas, a great deal of filth and heaps of litter are found collected near tea shops, fruit stalls and eat shops. Proper standards of cleanliness not only of what they serve but also of the vicinity where they run business should be prescribed by civic authorities and strictly enforced. Checking of these aspects should not once again be a weekly or monthly affair. It should form part of daily routine of supervisory staff.

The safai karmacharis by and large still use outmoded tools and implements for their work. Efforts should be made to ensure that fruits of our technical progress are made available to them also to spare them the use of decades old ways of going about their business. Also it will be useful to examine the possibility of instituting suitable awards or ex-gratia payments for efficient and conscientious discharge of duties.

Effective publicity campaigns aimed at producing general awareness of citizens' responsibilities in keeping their localities well-cleaned need to be organized by the civic authorities. The publicity services of the local radio stations and other media of popular approach to the citizens must be fully explored and exploited. Leaders of public opinion should be associated in such campaigns and difficulties experienced by people in their areas, as pointed out by them, may be speedily attended to.

To conclude, safai is a cooperative effort, where all including the karmacharis and the civic authorities have to contribute. Results can be achieved only if all concerned realize the role they have to play in providing healthy living conditions to our citizens.

CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

J. N. Singh

The success with which the public services can operate in a democracy depends, in no small measure, on public cooperation. This is all the more true in relation to the provision of civic services and amenities in our cities and towns, the need for which has been on a fast and ever-expanding increase due to the rapid pace of urbanization since Independence. As costs of providing the civic amenities are rising even faster on account of soaring prices of materials and swelling wage bills, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the local civic bodies, with their limited resources, to cope with the problem of providing and maintaining civic services at a satisfactory level.

By far the most vital requirement in the field of civic amenities, the responsibility for the provision of which devolves on a local civic body, irrespective of its size and resources, is the maintenance of adequate public health services which, in common parlance, embrace and control the eradication of communicable diseases, sanitation, conservancy services (including scavenging and drainage, removal and disposal of refuse) and anti-adulteration measures. Not infrequently the responsibility for the maintenance of medical relief services in the shape of minor hospitals, clinics and dispensaries also forms a part of the major civic bodies. In some cases, they may even be required to maintain specialised hospitals for communicable diseases as a part of their public health service.

The cost of provision of the public health services constitutes a major item of civic expenditure and generally involves a sizeable drain on their meagre resources. It is estimated that, on an all India basis about 60 per cent of the major civic bodies in the country spend as much as 20 to 50 per cent of their annual outlay on provision of public health services.

If we study the situation as it obtains in the capital and more particularly as it relates to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, which is the major local civic organisation here, the picture becomes more clear. In the matter of civic services the Municipal Corporation of Delhi has under its control almost the entire area of the Union Territory of Delhi, measuring about 1400 square kms. (leaving out only about 70 sq. kms. of area which falls under the purview of the other two civic bodies, viz., the New Delhi Municipal Committee and Delhi Cantonment Board). Out of the total population of a little over 40 lakhs in the whole Union Territory of Delhi, as many as 37 lakh persons inhabit the area falling under the control of Municipal Corporation of Delhi and about 32.9 lakhs of latter constitute the urban population. The 4 lakhs of persons residing in the rural areas under the control of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi are residing in about 300 villages scattered over an area of approximately 1160 sq. kms. The size and complexity of the problem involved in keeping the environments clean and healthy for the citizens of the Metropolis and its suburban and rural fringe can therefore be well imagined.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi maintains, under its programme of medical relief services, as many as six major and nine smaller hospitals, out of which four are in the nature of specialised hospitals, one each catering for the needs of T.B. patients and patients suffering from infectious diseases, one devoted to maternity services and one to the needs of women patients exclusively, the others being general hospitals. In addition, five primary Health Centres and six Maternity Homes also offer facilities for indoor treatment.

The cumulative bed strength of the Municipal Hospitals, public Health Centres and Maternity Homes, which cater for indoor patients is over 2400 out of which over 1100 beds are provided in the T. B. Hospital alone, which is the largest of its kind in Asia.

The number of Urban Health Centres and Dispensaries runs into 96 including a number of dispensaries and clinics providing treatment in the indigenous system of medicine. A number of clinics also provide specialised services like antirabic treatment, anti-leprosy treatment, domiciliary treatment for T. B. patients and treatment for venereal diseases.

The Corporation also maintains a Lepers' Home and a Home for the Foundlings. We also have about 100 Maternity and Child Welfare Centres and sub-Centres which not only cater to the antinatal and postnatal treatment of expectant mothers but also provide Family Planning Services. There is a separate School Health Service to cater to the health needs of young school children.

A Central Health Laboratory providing facilities for examination of pathological specimens, chemical and bacteriological tests of water and prophylactic treatment such as inoculation against Yellow Fever, etc., and a Central Food Laboratory as a part of the set-up for enforcing anti-Food Adulteration measures, also exist.

The set-up maintained for the Public Health Services supporting the medical relief services is even more elaborate and impressive, inevitable because any attempt to economize in the maintenance of clean and healthy environment would directly strain the medical services and push up their already heavy cost skywards. Our Public Health Services, therefore, comprise a strong cadre of qualified Public Health Officers at the senior, intermediary and junior levels designated as Health Officer, Deputy Health Officers, Assistant Health Officers, Sanitary Superintendents, Sanitary Inspectors and Sanitary Guides. At the lowest ranks there is a large contingent of about 12,000 sweepers and 250 lorry drivers, engaged in work relating to conservancy and scavenging and also quite a few hundreds of field beldars engaged in Anti-Malaria Operations.

All this set-up is currently costing the civic body about Rs. 7.1 crores annually which constitutes over 24 per cent of its annual total outlay. It will be worthwhile noting here that there has been almost a four-fold expansion in the set-up of the Public Health Services since the formation of the Corporation in 1958-59 and the expenditure thereon has also correspondingly risen to over 430 per cent, although the increase in urban area within the Corporation limits and population residing therein may have witnessed an increase of just about 55 per cent during the same period.

The purpose of citing all these facts and figures is to show how mammoth is the effect in terms of human, material and

financial resources required in keeping up the public health services to a reasonably satisfactory standard. The problems of further expanding or improving upon them, howsoever such expansion may be desirable, are to say the least, quite complex and difficult and attempts to resolve these problems will call for additional effort and resources, much beyond the existing financial capability of the Corporation. We can, on the other hand, hardly hope for a significant increase in our financial resources in the near future because our sources of income are limited in scope and we are already fairly heavily taxed.

The existing fast tempo of development and consequently of urbanization of the Union Territory of Delhi is, however, not only bound to continue unabated in the foreseeable future but is expected to accelerate further. As a direct result thereof, the need for expansion of civic amenities and more particularly of public health services will inevitably increase substantially, placing a bigger and bigger strain on the resources of the Corporation, which, in view of their limited scope, may not increase proportionately.

The issue of relative priorities in the provision of civic services will then assume serious importance and will inevitably need to be resolved satisfactorily. We shall then, in view of inadequacy of resources, be faced with the option of neglecting the vital public health services (which obviously we can do only at great peril to the population of the metropolis) or of diverting a sizable proportion of resources available for other equally important civic services like primary education, good roads, street lighting, water supply and drainage, etc., and thus further debilitating their already not too healthy framework. The choice will not be few. It is here and in this context that the citizens of the Metropolis will have to make a vital decision. Since the finding of sufficient resources to cope with the expanding needs and rising cost of providing the vital civic services, in an adequate measure, will surely and rapidly outstrip the capacity of the citizen to pay, the choice open will be either to forego or curtail some of the vital civic amenities or to seriously think of devising ways of cutting their costs without affecting their efficiency. The latter will undoubtedly be the wiser and most probably the only choice

Whereas the municipal administration can do a lot and does keep doing everything possible to reduce the cost of providing civic services by adopting means and methods of streamlining its work procedures by introducing a greater degree of mechanization in its work processes, there is a lot for instance, that a citizen can also do individually and collectively to help in this direction.

A very simple and small example of what lack of public cooperation with and participation in a civic body's effort to keep the environment clean can mean is provided by the unnecessary extra work that is thrown on the sweepers when, not utilising the waste-paper baskets, refuse receptacles and dustbins, we want only to litter the open spaces with whatever we can get rid of as refuse and rubbish, or when not heeding the spittoons and ash-trays we indulge in the unclean and often hazardous practice of splattering the floors and walls of public premises with spit or nasal excretions or when ignoring public urinals and other places of convenience, people resort to substitute open drains, streets and walls for them. We little realize that besides acting as serious disease carriers, these seemingly innocent acts of ours involve the civic body in a lot of avoidable extra effort and expense needed in keeping the environment clean and healthy which in consequence add to their operational costs, in turn, throwing extra financial burden on the citizens in the shape of inevitable additional taxes and increased cost of civic amenities. Some of these thousands of little noticed unsociable practices, on occasions, shows up as glaring instances of waste of national effort and resources, as for example, when a large contingent of sweepers has to be deployed on clearing up the 'muck' after the celebrations of a national festival on a plot of public land come to an end. Here too, despite the adequate provision of dustbins, waste-paper baskets and spittoons, etc., the ground would be found covered with an impenetrable sheet of waste paper, leaves, chaff, peelings, wrappers, left-overs, etc., and would present itself as a virtual Augean's stable needing a Herculean effort to restore to it a semblance of cleanliness.

The need for active public cooperation in the maintenance of essential public health services in the capital was more sharply brought into focus recently, when the Corporation faced a

45-day long work strike by its sweepers, which came to an end only a couple of weeks ago. During the worst period of this strike the absenteeism among the regular work force of about 12,000 sweepers ranged as high as about 50 per cent.

In order to maintain the sanitation of the city, at least at a safe level, the Corporation had, therefore, to resort to hiring of about 3,000 substitute sweepers daily during the critical period, and since much of the city cleaning work had to be undertaken in the face of opposition, acts of violence and sabotage by the strikers, the loyal workers had to be paid overtime for working at odd hours. Extra remuneration for hazards of duty had also to be paid. Additional trucks had to be hired for the hauling away of accumulated refuse. The Delhi Administration's own resources were also affected through additional strain devolving on the police force in maintaining law and order and ensuring protection for loyal workers. All these additional measures, which were strictly avoidable in a normal situation, may have involved the Corporation alone in an extra expenditure of not less than twenty to twenty-five lakhs of rupees, most of which was not inescapable. Here, too, effective public participation in the Corporation's efforts firstly to avert the crisis by correctly appreciating the causes and implications and explaining them to the intending strikers as well as to the public at large and then to face the crisis determinedly when it came, could have helped a great deal, not only in relieving the situation considerably but also in alleviating the financial burden entailed in it. This participation the citizens of Delhi could have ensured by doing their duty in observing the preliminary rules of sanitation, and by organizing special cleaning-up campaigns, etc., and if public cooperation and participation had become available in the requisite measure, much of the inconvenience caused during this emergency could have been avoided and the crisis tied over with less financial drain to the Corporation and also comparatively with considerable good lesson in reliance for the citizens.

The need for direct and effective public participation in the maintenance of civic services and more particularly in public health services is, therefore, self-evident.

The next point to consider is what the Corporation can do and is doing to educate the citizens of Delhi, so that they can

realize the obvious need for such participation. The Health Department of the Corporation has a publicity Health Education Unit which is responsible for educating the public in general, not only in how to keep their environment clean and in the observance of detailed rules of sanitation and anti-epidemic measures, but also in inculcating a proper civic sense of duty in an emergency. This is being done largely through the media of posters, pamphlets, film-strips, slides, etc. The community services Department of the Corporation has similarly a vital role to play through its network of Social Education Centres, Community Centres and Neighbourhood Committees, and the activities of these organizations also go a long way in fulfilling the need for imparting civic education to the citizens they come in contact with.

The task of civic education or, ultimately, that of ensuring active public participation in maintenance of essential public health services cannot, however, be left solely to the initiative of the civic bodies. It is a momentous and gigantic task, basically of character building of a child at home and at school and then making the public at large realize and do their duty not only in an hour or a period of crisis but also constantly in their day to day life as the citizens of this great city, the capital of our motherland. All official and non-official organisations and individuals working in the field of public and social service should, therefore, consider it as one of their primary duties to propagate proper civic sense in the circles of their influence. Teachers and parents should see to it that their children and wards are imbued with a high sense of public service and civic consciousness, to a degree that it forms a part of their character like other desirable habits and practices. Political, social and religious organisations and leaders should similarly consider it as one of their foremost duties to keep the vital subject of civic affairs above political, denominational or factional considerations, enthuse their followers in developing proper civic sense and, in an emergency, mobilize public opinion in the right direction and motivate action to ensure adequate and effective participation by the public in the maintenance of public health services which are basically vital to the health and life of the community.

Citizens' Councils, Mohalla Committees and Welfare

Organisations, which already exist in good numbers in all parts of the city, can also play a very useful and constructive role in this direction. In order to strengthen their efforts, the Delhi Administration and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi can and, in fact already do, to some extent, give them financial aid and loan of audio-visual material and equipment and provide them with suitable literature so that they can step up and keep up their activities in the field of Social Education (including civic education).

These Organisations should be encouraged to raise civic volunteer corps to undertake civic functions like city cleansing, guarding vital public health installations, fire fighting, first aid and other civic duties in an emergency. The Corporation's Health Department can organise short training courses for voluntary workers in duties of sanitation staff and maintain a list of these civic volunteer corps which can, with the cooperation and assistance of local leaders, be mobilized and pressed into service in an emergency.

The role of voluntary public participation in the maintenance of essential public health services in an emergency is thus obvious. It is, however, no less important in the normal times, when individual citizens and their organized groups like Welfare Committees, Councils, etc., can help the Municipal Administration in maintaining and improving the public health services by pinpointing flaws and deficiencies, making constructive suggestions for improvement and for plugging wastages in the use of public resources needed in the provision of these services. They can, similarly, inculcate a proper civic sense amongst the people in their circles of influence and help the civic bodies in their work by observing the rules of sanitation and ensuring that others in their field of influence do likewise. They should particularly ensure that strategic points in their respective mohallas/areas are kept clean; they should advise shopkeepers to deposit all waste and rubbish in suitable cans improvised for the purpose; they should impress on vendors and hawkers to avoid selling exposed or adulterated food and they should urge upon the public the importance of receiving vaccinations and inoculations in time in response to the appeal of the civic body. By acting thus, the

citizens will not only be helping the civic body to provide them public health services satisfactorily, efficiently and at a cheaper cost but will also be helping themselves in securing a clean and healthy environment to live in and lighter bills both from their doctors and from the Municipal Tax authorities.

This is what citizens' active involvement in public health services can help us achieve.

ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN CREATING CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Basudev Sharma

Information is the life blood, elan-vital of democracy. This is even more important in the context of civic bodies—an essential part of the democratic structure. Hence the importance of dissemination of information in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras where civic bodies are not only big but form an important part of the citizens' life and thus are, more or less, public relations organisations.

The functions of the Municipal Corporations are so intimately connected with the day to day life of a common citizen that almost every civic official, right from the Mayor to a safai karmachari is an equally important PR man. Early in the morning when most of us are still in bed, the elected representatives, called municipal councillors, and safai karmacharis are 'at it' doing their job but also projecting the image of the civic bodies. The civic job knows no discrimination; a casual visitor from a remote village is to be served with equal care and attention as an important personality of the town is treated.

Thus the Local Government is a big business and no big business worth its salt is unaware of the importance of its reputation. Goodwill is more important to local government than to a commercial enterprise whose success can be measured in the graph depicting rise or fall of its sales. The commercial venture just makes profit or goes out of business. The Local Government can do neither. Incidentally, it explains the limitations of the civic body and shows how it is placed in the democratic set-up.

There is yet another problem facing the Local Government. After the attainment of Independence, the hopes and expectations of the common man have risen primarily because of the rapidly changing living standards in cities. Our citizens now

compare civic services with those provided in the most modern cities in the advanced or developed countries of the world. But there has been practically no increase in powers and resources of the civic bodies. The old set-up albeit out-dated which we had inherited from the British is still continuing and the local Government is functioning under great stresses and strains. Its economy is pathetic and is not in a position to deliver the goods. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the almost cynical attitude of our citizens towards the civic bodies, developed during the freedom struggle is still persisting.

Here comes the role of public relations in all its dimensions. How to gain public confidence? How to create a sense of awareness among the citizens about the civic problems so that the present negative attitude transforms into a positive thinking? This is the crux of the problem indeed.

Before we examine the existing set-up in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, it must be properly understood that the public relations is a two-way traffic. An atmosphere of goodwill and mutual understanding cannot be created through publicity or propaganda alone. Mere propaganda in the long run is bound to boomerang and shall tarnish the whole image of the PR activities and the institution it seeks to serve. The citizens like mere propaganda with a pinch of salt and develop a strong aversion to it. The local Government's structure and activities will have to be improved substantially. That is the only way to ensure its impact and to arouse citizens' interest. And that is possible if a proper perspective of the local government set-up is projected. Only then the much needed public cooperation for the civic bodies will be forthcoming.

Delhi Municipal Corporation's Press and Information Office at the Headquarters in Town Hall maintains a close liaison between the Press and the civic authorities; the two PR Offices in Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking and Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking perform PR and Publicity functions as separate entities. The Community Services Department, headed by a Director, runs complaint and enquiry sections at Town Hall and in the Zonal Offices of the Corporation. Community Halls, Social Education Centres, functioning under the Director of Community Services and the Welfare Centres run in the civic

employee's colonies, and cater to the cultural needs of the residents. In addition, the Vigilance Department hears public complaints in the presence of senior officers of the concerned departments.

MANY PUBLICS

The concept of many publics is very much true in the case of a big Municipal Corporation like Delhi. The number of civic employees in Delhi is over 50,000 and if we count their family members they form quite a sizable portion of the whole population of the Capital. So, if we are somehow able to educate them properly, we should be doing real service to the city as these families spread over in all the areas, would then be instrumental in creating an understanding and enlisting cooperation from their fellow citizens.

Internally, therefore, we need to coordinate our activities in such a way that all the genuine complaints relating to any civic service are dealt with promptly by the Labour Welfare Department. Welfare centres and sports club can also help in developing goodwill. Once this feeling gets its root, the employees would realise their responsibility towards their real masters—the tax-payers and would deal with them courteously and helpfully.

Then, there are other publics. The Government employees, teachers, students, workers, business community, etc., forming separate groups and meeting different treatment. The newspapers, radio, television and printed literature may cut some ice with the educated lot but for illiterates, audio-visual aids may be the right media for dissemination of information. To reach the targeted audience effectively and completely the following media can gainfully be employed :

Press

The Press is the main source of information in big cities. In a fixed day of the week regular educative advertisements in leading newspapers can help enlighten the citizens about the civic services.

Television and Radio

The Government should be approached to telecast sponsored

municipal information programmes to enlighten the public. It can cover a wide audience besides ensuring a positive impact on the citizens. This media can also be used to vent public grievances and as a forum for discussions on the civic matters. To supplement the prime media, short documentaries based on the main advertisement campaign or on important civic events need be prepared and shown in the community centers and other public places. These can also be supplied to the Film Division, which could make the required number of prints and release to the local movie houses. To support the film media, slides can be exhibited in cinemas.

Hoardings

Lately, hoardings have developed into the best supporting media and must be gainfully employed to put across the required message. On open long roads, kiosks can serve the best media to convey the message if used in continuance because the passer-by cannot miss it.

Publications

The common man is very much harassed and subjected to all sorts of inconveniences and delay if he is not aware of the rules, regulations and procedures of the department with which he is dealing. Publications of small booklets containing detailed information regarding procedures, etc., are therefore, a must. Brochures highlighting the achievements of particular department can make the citizens interested and can help create among them a sense of belonging and partnership in civic activities. Specially designed and artistically prepared coloured posters displayed on city walls in and around important places can help the civic campaign.

REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

Public interest is often exhibited through complaints and the efficiency of a civic body is adjudged with the speed with which the complaint is attended to. Therefore, it becomes the prime duty of the civic officials to give a patient hearing to the complainant and satisfy him to the best of their ability and capacity.

The Interim Report of the Administrative Reforms Commission has also recommended in this context: "In essence,

therefore, the main issue before us is how to provide the citizens with an institution to which he can have easy access for the redressal of his grievances and which he is unable to seek elsewhere. The fact that he had a reasonable opportunity of presenting his case before an authority, which is in a different hierarchy from the authority which passes the order and which is independent and impartial, would in itself be a source of satisfaction to the citizens concerned even where the result of investigation is unfavourable to him....It has to be an institution in which the average citizen will have faith and confidence through which he will be able to secure quick and inexpensive justice."

Information Offices

The information offices at the headquarters and at the zonal offices must be feeded with latest statistics and information so that the man at the counter is fully conversant with all rules, regulations and procedures and is able to help and guide the complainant. Action taken must be reported back in all cases promptly. The matters requiring investigations or inquiry be acknowledged and thereafter replied to. At Town Hall, round-the-clock service and provision of guides who may escort the complainant to the respective officer will help in creating goodwill and understanding. Complaint boxes can also be placed at convenient public places such as community halls, community centers, etc.

Vigilance

More often than not, the civic complaints need a thorough investigation by the Vigilance Cell. The civic authorities should inform the result of inquiry to the complainant as soon as possible.

Consultation Service

In Tokyo, consultation cars make the round of the city to open on the street consultations about civic matters. The civic body must have publicity vans to inform the citizens about the civic events and notifications.

Conducted Tours

To acquaiat citizens, tours to visit civic projects should be

sponsored for the students and social workers to acquaint them with the municipal services.

Training Programmes

Maintenance of civic services during the emergency can go a long way in enlisting active cooperation from the public. During the national emergency fire-fighting groups were organised and trained. Similar groups can be organised in respect of other services as well.

Citizens' Forum

The Delhi Municipal Corporation Act envisages the formation of ward committees for maintaining proper liaison with the citizens. Under the guidance of elected representatives such committees can prove to be an effective media of enlisting active cooperation from the residents.

Regular get-together at Town Hall and lectures on civic matters would help in creating right type of atmosphere and would also establish a rapport between the citizens and the civic authorities.

CONCLUSION

The public relations in Delhi Municipal Corporation and its two wings—DESU and the Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking—does not have much of an impact at present. For one thing, it woefully lacks coordination. For another, the idea of public relations is not adequately understood both by the executive wing and the deliberative wing. The concept of public relations is appreciated but only to a limited context that is in dealing with the press. Assisting the press in collecting the information is no doubt a very important activity but it cannot be the 'be all-end-all' of the Public Relations Cell. The Press and Information Office should be properly equipped to disseminate information to the press and police and to refer the complaints to the concerned authorities for prompt action. It should be an independent entity answerable only to the Chief Executive of the Corporation and should be authorised to collect information, etc., on the pattern of the Vigilance Department. The PR job is extremely crucial and needs a total support of the executive and

deliberative wings of the Corporation. The present hotch-potch arrangement should be done away with and a unified set-up properly staffed be evolved. It is time, the half-hearted support to the PR activities, based on some half baked concepts and ideas, was transformed to a real reorganisation of the Press and Information Office with proper status that it deserves. The result is a typical stereotyped outmoded thinking. Today, Delhi Municipal Corporation cannot boast of an efficient round-the-clock information service or cells to attend civic complaints.

An efficient, modern information service would alone effectively correct wrong thinking of the citizens about the local government besides guiding properly the civic authorities about people's problem. It can project the civic body as something valuable to those it serves. Restoring local Governments to its rightful position in public esteem could have a cumulative effect. It could improve the relations between civic bodies and citizens and set in motion a chain reaction which will make the local government worthy of its status.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CITIZENS' GRIEVANCES

A Syndicate Report by Municipal Officers

Local Government is conceived as an instrument for the creation of the widest possible participation of the people in good government and development of their countries. The Municipal Services rendered mostly relate to maintaining of water supply, proper disposal of sewage, proper street lighting, providing primary and secondary education, libraries and adult education centres, public transport, hospitals, clinics and maintaining of various recreational centres.

The participation of the people in these activities is of such an intimate nature that the local government is almost carried up to the door of the citizen. This nearness brings up the importance of public relations.

Being face to face with the public, there are occasions when the citizens develop grievances against the local bodies. The redressal of grievances is very necessary for the proper functioning of the local government.

The object of this report is to study the existing system of redressal of citizens' grievances with special reference to municipal services and suggest the reforms at various levels. In addition to this, the report shall also deal with the problem of improving the public relations.

EXISTING MACHINERY FOR REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES

The existing machinery for redressal of grievances in the present set-up of the Municipal bodies can be broadly divided into two parts:

- (i) Internal set-up, and
- (ii) Elected Councillors.

Taking into consideration the internal set-up, it is observed that there are two agencies which perform this work. The

agencies are : (a) Public Relations Officer, and (b) Vigilance Officer.

As a case study, the functions of Public Relations Officer of Kanpur Municipal Corporation have been noted. They are as follows :

- (a) He reads the various newspapers and magazines, especially the local one and in the regional language to sort out the complaints against the different branches of Corporation and sends them to the Commissioner for proper action.
- (b) He publishes the magazine of Corporation which contains various achievements and programmes.
- (c) He arranges for the advertisement in various newspapers and magazines regarding the activities of the Corporation.

Apart from the post of Public Relations Officer, there is another agency known as Vigilance Officer, who looks after the various complaints. He works directly under the Commissioner. A post of Vigilance Officer is existing in the New Delhi Municipal Committee. The complaints regarding corruption and undue favour or illegal gratification are received by him. He makes an enquiry and submits the findings to the President, New Delhi Municipal Committee.

The elected representatives of the people are instrumental in redressing the grievances of the citizens. These Councillors meet the citizens of their localities almost daily and a number of complaints regarding the municipal services are made to them. The councillors may either put the complaints in the general body meetings or settle them after seeing the proper authorities.

The Councillors utilize the period of 'Question Hour' in the meeting of the Council to place the grievance of the citizens. If the complaints are of a very serious nature, members put an adjournment motion on that issue as soon as the meeting begins. In this way the complaints are put and the redressal is done by proper methods as envisaged by Commissioner.

DEFICIENCIES IN THE EXISTING MACHINERY

Internal Set-up

The existing machinery does not seem to be complete. The

work of Public Relations Officer is done in a very routine way. Public Relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an organisation with the public interest and executes a programme of action (and communication) to earn public understanding and acceptance.

On a critical analysis of the above functions, it has been observed that 'evaluation of public attitude' is almost completely lacking. In the existing system the Public Relations Officer fails to create an awareness in the public about the services rendered by the Municipal bodies. Apart from this, by and large, the citizens are ill-informed about the procedure of the Corporation. These shortcomings should be overcome and the Public Relations Officer should work with a wider outlook.

As regards the deficiency in the working of Vigilance Officer, it would be sufficient to mention here that many complaints of serious nature pertaining to higher officials are not dealt with firmly. Some of the officers in Corporation are of a higher status than him. Naturally, he would hesitate to make any enquiry. Not only this, there may be complaints even against the Commissioner or any Councillor. Such complaints cannot be looked into by him. This would require a third agency.

Elected Councillors

The elected Councillors also fail to perform their functions as the persons entrusted with the job of redressal of grievances. This is mainly due to the interplay of political party system and operation of vested interests. Often, the Councillors do not have sufficient knowledge of the working of local authorities to pinpoint the course of grievances. It has been observed that sometimes the Councillors put the grievances during the 'Question Hour' simply to attract the attention of Press. There are many Councillors who do not take day to day interest in their localities which results in the accumulation of grievances.

SUGGESTED REFORMS

Reforms within the Existing System

In the existing system of the working of Public Relations Officer, it has already been pointed out, many deficiencies are

prevalent. These shortcomings can be made up by assigning additional functions to the Public Relations Officer. This subject will be dealt below.

Additional Functions of the Public Relations Officer. The office of the Public Relations Officer should be reorganised. He should be provided with sufficient staff to undertake the following additional jobs.

Publication of Booklets. He should publish small booklets or leaflets in a very simple regional language on subjects such as 'How to apply for new water connection'; 'How to get the building plans approved'; 'Whom to approach'; 'What can we do'. By these small booklets citizens at large will be able to know their duties as well as the amenities they can enjoy. It should be specifically mentioned in the leaflets, in case of certain services, that these services are rendered free of cost. This will go a long way in minimising the channels of illegal gratification.

When the citizens will have such literature ready at hand their 'awareness' will increase. If the Public Relations Officer could create this, the number of grievances will also diminish.

Maintenance of Suggestion and Complaint Register. Public Relations Officer should compile the information from various 'suggestion and complaint registers' which should be kept at different zones in the city. The information regarding suggestions will help in determining the public attitude. This information should be forwarded to the Commissioner. In this way, some evaluation of public attitude, will be done. Suppose quite a good number of suggestion, in a particular locality come for making a library. The authorities can have proper action. The compliance report on the complaints should be put before the Commissioner.

On many occasions, if the suggestions are properly ventilated, the fear of agitation subsides. For example, suppose a few persons continuously suggest for providing a public waterstand post at a particular place. If timely action is taken on their suggestion, people will feel happy about it. Otherwise, a deputation may come at Corporation building and agitate for the same.

Running of Enquiry Office. A sort of 'Information Bureau'

should be located in the Corporation building, which should be under the Public Relations Officer. The citizens should be courteously received and directed to meet the right official. The person sitting at the counter should be well versed with working of each department of the Corporation. Many a times, the information on the spot might satisfy the citizen. He should not feel bewildered on entering the Corporation building. Howsoever minor requirement he has, it should be fulfilled. Municipal Corporation of Varansi is maintaining an enquiry office of this type.

Reorientation of Administration. The administration needs to be reoriented from the citizens' points of view, if the grievances are to be reduced. Programmes of the type 'Meet the people' or 'Contact the citizens' should be organised. In this programme the Commissioner should visit the different localities on previously announced dates. He should be accompanied by the Heads of the Departments such as Health Officer, Chief Engineer, Water Works Engineer, whose working is directly concerned with the citizens. It would be still better if the elected representatives of that area also accompany the Commissioner. By organising such activities many of the minor grievances might be solved on the spot itself.

The distance between the citizen and administrators in our country is enlarged because of the official language of communications and transactions being different from the language of common folk. The bulk of the people who do not know English, are at the mercy either of middlemen who know the language or the officials who interpret the official communicate. The people at the cutting edge make capital out of the language handicap of the common man in several ways ranging from snobbery to profiteering; which ultimately leads to grievances. It would be in fitness of things, if the language barrier is broken as early as possible. Steps should be taken to transact the business in the language of the people.

Officers should meet the public during certain hours daily. Telephone service in the enquiry office should be provided round the clock.

There is yet another way of achieving success in the redressal of grievances. The city should be divided into various

zones. In each zone a committee may be formed comprising of Councillors and Zonal Officers and a few respected citizens of that zone. They may sit together and dispose off the grievance of that Zone with respect to the Municipal services in that area from time to time.

Role of Social Education

Though the Municipalities strive their best to serve the people, yet it would be wrong for the people to completely depend upon the municipality for each and everything. It is unfortunate that the functions of State and local government have such a large sweep that the citizens do not like to do anything themselves. There is a great need of making people socially educated. Without social education the civic consciousness will hardly develop. And if the civic consciousness is not there the people would not reap the benefits of municipal services.

If the civic sense is developed in the citizens, probably half of the complaints would vanish. It can be illustrated by an example. It is a usual sight to see a 'public water tap' running all the twenty-four hours. How many of the citizens who pass by the tap take the trouble of informing the concerned authorities? It hardly takes a few minutes to change the tap or replace the washer. But this is possible only when the citizens are civic minded. They should feel that water going to waste is the water denied to them. Probably their complaint of low pressure at their own houses may be due to leaking taps at the public places. As soon as this awareness will come in their minds, the citizens would hasten to inform Water Works Engineer for repairs.

People should be socially educated through municipal as well as other non-governmental agencies. In this connection coordination can be brought about by the zonal committees already suggested. After this education they might like to do many things themselves without depending upon the government to do that. To make the people socially educated audio-visual aids should be used. Film shows should be organised in a particular locality to elucidate the various steps the government is taking. It should also show what the people should do in the

event of any catastrophe. For example, in case of infectious diseases such as cholera, etc., what should be done by the people, need be impressed upon their minds. This can be achieved by posters, film shows, etc.

In the above context, government has launched 'Urban Community Development Projects', wherein a particular type of community education is imparted to the people. This would go a long way in minimising their grievances. The people are made aware of the services and how to utilise them properly. To illustrate this, an example was given by the Administrator, Agra Municipal Corporation. In a particular locality in Agra, public latrines were provided in response to their grievances. People were not made aware of the uses of latrines. They did not know how to sit and how to handle the flush system. The result was, the latrines were not used properly. It is here that the Community Development Project Staff should step in. By publicity and proper education a public opinion should be created in favour of the maximum use of the services rendered by the municipalities.

Creation of an Independent Agency

The Interim Report of the Administrative Reforms Commission on Problems of Redressal of Citizens' Grievances has very rightly pointed out the necessity of an independent institution in the following words, "...In essence, therefore, the main issue before us is how to provide the citizen with an institution to which he can have easy access for the redressal of his grievances and which he is unable to seek elsewhere...The fact that he has had a reasonable opportunity of presenting his case before an authority which is in a different hierarchy from the authority which passes the order and which is independent and impartial, would in itself be a source of satisfaction to the citizen concerned even where the result of investigation is unfavourable to him. It has to be an institution in which the average citizen will have faith and confidence and through which he will be able to secure quick and inexpensive justice."

Though there are difficulties in having an institution of this type, but the difficulties are not insurmountable. What the

Administrative Reforms Commission has recommended for the government at the Centre and at the States, the same can be suggested at the local government level. The authority should be independent of the executive as well as the deliberative wing of the Municipal Corporation. He should have a judicial background. His recommendations should be sent to the Commissioner for further action. In case his recommendations are not acted upon, this authority may put the matter before the general council.

The type of agency as suggested above will be suitable only in case of Municipal Corporations. The Municipal Board cannot afford to keep the office of this status. Moreover, the nature of complaints in their case would be not of such serious nature.

CONCLUSION

In view of what has been written above it can easily be concluded that though the existing machinery for redressal of citizens, grievances is far from satisfactory, yet an effective improvement can be brought out. Though the task is hard, it is not impossible. The Public Relations Officer has an important role to play in improving the relations between the public and local government. He should be assigned additional duties which have already been indicated in details. If he takes more interest in his work, the gap between the administrator and administered would be minimised.

Not only this, the attitude of public towards administration also needs a change. In this connection, Prof. Robson in a thoughtful speech has aptly remarked that the achievement of good relations between the government and the public is a matter which does not by any means depend solely on the conduct of civil servants and politicians. It depends equally on the attitude of citizens, groups, corporations, associations of all kinds and indeed of all unofficial bodies to public authorities. A sort of give and take attitude on the part of both—citizens and administrators will definitely improve public relations.

Reorientation of administration from the citizens' point of view is equally necessary for the removal of grievances. With the development of social education, broader outlook, general awareness about the rights and duties, many of the complaints

would vanish in due course of time. It is said that a patient hearing and a courteous reception to the complainant would relieve half of his grievances. The other half can be removed by the effective role of the authority concerned in getting this done properly and in speed.

Apart from the above, in order to improve the machinery for redressal of grievances, it would not be improper to examine the feasibility of an independent institution. This agency would be aloof from, as well as superior to, the executive and deliberative wing.

The object of the local government in providing services to the people would be met fully only when the citizens go satisfied.

